



April 17, 2007

H.Con.Res. 100 - Condemning the recent violent actions of the Government of Zimbabwe against peaceful opposition party activists and members of civil society

Floor Situation

H.Con.Res. 100 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Tom Lantos (D-CA) on March 26, 2007. The bill was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, which agreed, by voice vote, to seek consideration of the bill on the House floor under suspension of the rules.

H.Con.Res. 100 is expected to be considered on the floor on April 17, 2007.

Summary

H.Con.Res. 100 resolves that:

- It is the sense of Congress that:
 - The state-sponsored violence taking place in Zimbabwe represents a serious violation of fundamental human rights and the rule of law and should be condemned by all responsible governments, civic organizations, religious leaders, and international bodies; and,
 - The Government of Zimbabwe has not lived up to its commitments as a signatory to the Constitutive Act of the African Union and African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights which enshrine commitment to human rights and good governance as foundational principles of African states; and,
- Congress:
 - Condemns the Government of Zimbabwe's violent suppression of political and human rights through its police force, security forces, and youth militia that deliberately inflict gross physical harm, intimidation, and abuse on those legitimately protesting the failing policies of the government;

- Holds those individual police, security force members, and militia involved in abuse and torture responsible for the acts that they have committed;
- Condemns the harassment and intimidation of lawyers attempting to carry out their professional obligations to their clients and repeated failure by police to comply promptly with court decisions;
- Condemns the harassment of foreign officials, journalists, human rights workers, and others, including threatening their expulsion from the country if they continue to provide food and water to victims detained in prison and in police custody while in the hospital;
- Commends United States Ambassador Christopher Dell and other United States Government officials and foreign officials for their support to political detainees and victims of torture and abuse while in police custody or in medical care centers and encourages them to continue providing such support;
- Calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to cease immediately its violent campaign against fundamental human rights, to respect the courts and members of the legal profession, and to restore the rule of law while adhering to the principles embodied in an accountable democracy, including freedom of association and freedom of expression;
- Calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to cease illegitimate interference in travel abroad by its citizens, especially for humanitarian purposes; and,
- Calls on the leaders of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the African Union to consult urgently with all Zimbabwe stakeholders to intervene with the Government of Zimbabwe while applying appropriate pressures to resolve the economic and political crisis.

Background

In 2005 the Government of Zimbabwe launched Operation Murambatsvina ('Operation Throw Out the Trash') against citizens in major cities and suburbs throughout Zimbabwe, depriving over 700,000 people of their homes, businesses, and livelihoods. On March 11, 2007, opposition party activists and members of civil society attempted to hold a peaceful prayer meeting to protest the economic and political crisis engulfing Zimbabwe, where inflation is running over 1,700 percent and unemployment stands at 80 percent and in response Robert Mugabe's announcement that he intends to seek reelection in 2008 if nominated.

Opposition activist Gift Tandare died on March 11, 2007, as a result of being shot by police while attempting to attend the prayer meeting and Itai Manyeruke died on March 12, 2007, as a result of police beatings and was found in a morgue by his family on March 20, 2007.

Cost

This bill has not been scored by the Congressional Budget Office.

Staff Contact

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